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Philokalia and St Gregory Palamas: An Introduction

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1. Why *Philokalia*? Why *Philokalia* in relation to St Gregory Palamas?

Philokalia is a collection of texts of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church (4th-15th c.), published for the first time in Venice in 1782 (in the original Greek) and which are mostly concerned with the spiritual life, thinking and sayings of monks living in the desert and in monasteries. The title and the subtitle of the collection of these texts are indicative of their meaning and purpose*: Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπτικῶν συνερανισθεῖσα παρά τῶν ἁγίων και θεοφόρων Πατέρων ἡμῶν. Ἐν ᾗ διά τῆς κατά τήν πρᾶξιν και θεωρίαν ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁ νοῦς καθαίρεται, φωτίζεται και τελειοῦται* (Philokalia of the Holy Neptics, compiled by our Holy and God-bearing Fathers; in this, the mind (*nous*) is purified, enlightened and perfected, through moral (ethical) philosophy, in both its practical (*praxis*) and theoretical (*theoria*) aspects [my translation]).

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Four things are worthy of mention regarding this title and subtitle:

a) the choice of the word *Philokalia* (*Φιλοκαλία*) denotes not only an association with the previous collection of mystical texts by St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian, but also an emphasis on the love for what is good and beautiful (see here the use of the word in Ancient Greek literature and more particularly in the Funeral Oration of Pericles delivered at Kerameikos at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) as a part of the annual public funeral services for the war dead. This word (verb derivative) as preserved by Thucydides (2, 40, 1) in a most cited sentence has this form: *Φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας* (the sentence here means that "we love the beautiful and good in simplicity and we do philosophy without softening our strength and virtue [my translation]).

b) The choice of the word *nepsis* (*Νηπτικῶν* is a derivative from *νῆψις, νήφω,* i.e., not drinking of wine, I am sober) denotes the sober, prudent and reserved state of mind of the Hesychasts during their hard efforts to purify their mind and heart. *Neptikoi* (as characterising those who exercise *nepsis*) was a more generic term covering not only Hesychasts but also Fathers who exercised in the Desert even before the Hesychasts. Note also that St Makarios and St Nikodemos do not claim that it is *their own* words nor that they compiled these sayings themselves (in a familiar to them way, they see their work as one of editors and publishers and not as writing or collecting in an original way sayings of the Fathers). St Nikodemos of Mt Athos in his Introduction to the Venice edition of the *Philokalia*, elaborates on what is *nepsis*; he names *Philokalia* "a treasure of *nepsis*", and connects it to *hesychia*, both *nepsis* and *hesychia* referring to the serene state of the heart of the Hesychasts. For St Nikodemos, *nepsis* is full attentiveness and guard of the

mind in its serene, hesychastic state. St Nikodemos has here in mind (among others) Evagrius of Pontos' meaning of pure prayer as devoid of all images and earthly pursuits and desires (first book of *Philokalia*), and St Gregory of Sinai's depiction of hesychasm as devoid of all earthly meaning and thoughts (fourth book of *Philokalia*; where St Gregory of Sinai follows St John of Sinai or of the Ladder dicta in his 27 step, following what Evagrius says about prayer to describe in his own way *hesychia* as a step towards perfection; see Ιωάννη Κλίμακος, *Κλίμαξ* 27; PG 88:1112A). St Nikodemos finds that the two (*nepsis* and *hesychia*) are united in *Philokalia* and provide the meaning and significance of hesychasm that is most important for both lay people and monastics in their pursuit of the treasure of the heart that is Jesus Christ (Luke 17, 21; Matthew 13, 44); through Him and in Him they will find freedom from the bonds of this world and the wandering of the mind.

c) The choice of the word "philosophy". The use of the word "philosophy" is by no accident. The Saints are one with the Patristic Tradition in taking "philosophy" as "true philosophy", which is in essence what we today consider as "theology" but with more apodeictic and critical thinking elements (see for example the works of early Christian apologists: Aristides' *Apology for the Christian Faith* and Justin Martyr's similar in nature *First and Second Apologies*). St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, in his Introduction to the Venice edition is frequently using philosophy with this meaning (as true philosophy, leading and becoming one with theology).

d) The emphasis on the unity and intrinsic relation of praxis and theoria. *Praxis* here is not considered as different than *theoria,* but *praxis* and *theoria* are considered as one and the same (this brings the Philokalia Fathers against the Ancient Greek tradition of subjugating *praxis* to *theoria*: in this tradition *theoria* is considered

as more important than *praxis* and any success in *theoria* is considered as independent from a specific *praxis*). *Theoria* [from thea (θέα) "a view" + horan (ὁρᾶν) "to see"] in *Philokalia* has a more theological content (note that some of the works of the Fathers of Philokalia have *theoria* in their title- I mention some below in my selection of texts of key relevance to St Gregory Palamas texts). It is not only speculation and theorising (its usual meaning in Ancient Greek philosophy), but also now it gains the meaning of a vision of God, mystical illumination enacted by divine grace.[1] In both Plato and Aristotle, *theoria* is what we should aim for as having profound value and leading us to truth.[2] It is by no accident that Plotinus, one of the key representatives of Neoplatonism, in his *Enneads*, claims that everything is *theoria* and everything is derived from *theoria*.[3] What the early Fathers (especially the Cappadocians) did with this prior understanding of *theoria* is remarkable. Jaeger notes on St Gregory of Nyssa's use of philosophy and *theoria*: "The analogy between (Gregory's) terminology and thought and that of the ancient initiators of the philosophic ideal of life is a perfect one. The ascetics themselves are called by him 'philosophers' or 'the philosophic chorus'. Their activity is called 'contemplation' (θεωρία), and to the present day this word, even when we use it to designate the θεωρητικός βίος of the ancient Greek philosophers,

1. See Fr Andrew Louth, "Theology, Contemplation and the University" in *Studia Theologica*, I (2003), 66-67. From now: Louth 2003. William, Johnson, *The Inner Eye of Love: Mysticism and Religion* (London: Harper Collins, 1997). From now: Johnson 1997.
2. See Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Its Cultural Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). From now: Wilson Nightingale 2004. Richard Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). From now: Kraut 1991.
3. See Lloyd P. Gerson, *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 31.

has preserved the overtone which transformation into a technical term of Christian asceticism has added to it".[4] *Theoria* is a term favoured by St Symeon the New Theologian and all the Hesychasts (with this new added meaning of uniting *praxis* and *theoria* in the sense that the Cappadocian Fathers gave to the term). A follower of Palamas, Kallistos Katafygiotes (found in the 5th Volume of Philokalia) has the term *Theoria* in the title of one of his works. Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos notes on the use of this term by the Hesychasts: "*Theoria* is the vision of the glory of God. *Theoria* is identified with the vision of the uncreated Light, the uncreated energy of God, with the union of man with God, with man's *theosis*. Thus, *theoria*, vision and *theosis* are closely connected. *Theoria* has various degrees. There is illumination, vision of God, and constant vision (for hours, days, weeks, even months). Noetic prayer is the first stage of *theoria*. Theoretical man is one who is at this stage. In Patristic theology, the theoretical man is characterised as the shepherd of the sheep." Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos proceeds to make a special mention of St Symeon the New Theologian (we find his texts in the fourth volume of *Philokalia* and had a major impact on St Gregory Palamas): "This is what Saint Symeon the New Theologian teaches. In his poems, proclaims over and over that, while beholding the uncreated Light, the deified man acquires the Revelation of God the Trinity. Being in '*theoria*' (vision of God), the saints do not confuse the hypostatic attributes. The fact that the Latin tradition came to the point of confusing these hypostatic attributes and teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also, shows the non-existence of empirical theology for them. Latin tradition speaks also of created grace, a fact which suggests that there is no experience of the grace of God. For, when man obtains the experience of God, then he comes to understand

4. See Werner Jaeger, *Two rediscovered works of ancient Christian literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* (E.J. Brill, 1954), 21-22.

well that this grace is uncreated. Without this experience there can be no genuine 'therapeutic tradition'".[5] Note, in relation to this, St Gregory Palamas' own words on how *hesychia* relates to *theoria* and *praxis*. *Hesychia* for St Gregory Palamas is related to: "the overthrow of the mind and the world, the forgetfulness of all that is earthly, the mystical experience of what is heavenly, the throwing of meanings for what is better and above meanings, the going towards the true *theoria* or *theoptia* (vision of God), to say something that is more proper" (my translation) [*τὴν νοῦ καὶ κόσμου στάσιν, τὴν λήθην τῶν κάτω, τὴν μύστην τῶν ἄνω, τὴν τῶν νοημάτων ἐπί τῶν κρεῖττον ἀπόθεσιν, αὐτη πράξις ὡς ἀληθῶς, ἐπίβασις τῆς ὡς ἀληθῶς θεωρίας ἢ θεοπτίας, εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον*] (Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ, *Ὁμιλία 53*, 33).[6] Note that here St. Gregory Palamas refers directly to the famous *πράξις, θεωρίας επίβασις* (*praxis* is expression, coming into fruition, of *theoria* [my translation]) that St Gregory the Theologian stressed: «*Βούλει Θεολόγος γενέσθαι ποτέ και της Θεότητος άξιος; Τας εντολάς φύλασσε, διά των προσταγμάτων όδευσον. Πράξις γαρ θεωρίας επίβασις...*» (Ε.Π.Ε. 4, 274). According to St Gregory the Theologian, this *theoria* can have only one end and final destination: God ([*Θεωρία*] *Είναι η άφιξις εις το ακρότατον των νοουμένων, τον Θεόν, εις τον οποίον σταματά πάσα έφεσις και αναπαύεται πάσα θεωρία*) (PG 35, 1084). Note how this is transformed by Kallistos Aggelikoudes (a follower of St Gregory Palamas) in the 5th Volume of Philokalia: Κεφάλαια (§19): "*Η πράξη του νου βρίσκεται στη λεπτή εργασία και στη συνεχή θεία μελέτη και στην αδιάλειπτη προσευχή και στα όμοια· πραγματοποιείται δε στο επιθυμητικό μέρος και καλείται θεωρία*" (*Praxis* of the mind is in the intellectual work and in continuous theological study and in the never ceasing

5. Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, *Orthodox Spirituality: A brief introduction*, Chapter 2, 1994, as found in http://orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/hierotheos_difference.aspx (accessed 14/06/2020).
6. Γ. Μαντζαρίδη, *Παλαμικά* (Θεσσαλονίκη: εκδ. Πουρνάρα, 1998), 80.

prayer and the like; it is made complete in the appetitive part and it is called *theoria*).[7] Here *praxis* is transformed into *theoria*, where *theoria* is the end result of a long process of *praxis*. Also, note that *theoria* is in the *appetitive* part (this needs further elaboration that belongs in another work).

Now, written collections of sayings of important people exist in many forms in Western Civilisation (following the ancient Greek tradition of *Apopthegmata -Αποφθέγματα*). Just to give you some examples: *Apophthegmata* of Delphi (147 Delphic Maxims, discussed by Diogenes Laertius in the 3rd century AD and later Stobaeus in the 5th c.), *Apophthegmata Laconica* attributed to Plutarchus (AD46-119), *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Sayings of the [Christian Desert] Fathers or otherwise known in Greek as *Γεροντικόν*, appearing in various versions from around 400), *Apophthegmata Macarii Magni* etc. In the East, there were many similar collections, which even predated Greek collections: for example, Jewish, Ugaritic, Sumerian and Accadian collections of sayings existed in wide circulation in the Mediterranean and Middle East.[8] Further East one could mention the sayings of Lao Tzu, Confucius and Buddha (among others). But this collection of texts (of the *Philokalia*) is the one that monasteries in all the Orthodox world favour for spiritual edification just before the Holy Pascha and other great feasts. This they do for many reasons: some of the Fathers mentioned in the *Philokalia* have their feasts

7. See *Φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών*, μτφρ. Αντώνιος Γαλίτης, (εκδ. Το περιβόλι της Παναγίας, 1986), ε΄τόμος.
8. Leo G. Perdue, *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); Carl Ehrlich, *From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature,* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

before the Holy Pascha, monastics see in the texts of the *Philokalia* good food for thought and spiritual edification esp. before this major Feast, there is a unifying theme of compunction, repentance and humility that is emphasised in this period, and a few others (that perhaps may be the focus of a future study).

A relatively recent revival of interest among the lay Orthodox Christians took place with the publications of various versions of the *Philokalia* texts in Greece and abroad. In the Greek speaking world, one could mention the re-publication of the Venice editions of *Philokalia* by Tzelatis in 1893 (containing also some texts on prayer by Patriarch Kallistos, a follower of Palamas, not found in the 1782 edition), and later, at the end of the 1940s, by the Astir Publications (Papademetriou Brothers), with continuous editions till now. In the English speaking world, through the translation and edition of *Philokalia* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, G.E.H. Palmer and Philip Sherrard over 20 years (1979-99; based on the Astir Publications version, but note that the 5th Volume has not yet been published in English; also note that the Introduction written by St Nicodemos and his notes are omitted in the English translation). In Slavonic language, there is a translation of selected texts by St Paisius Velichkovsky (Dobrotolublye, Добротолю́бїе) published in 1793 in St Petersburg; a Russian translation by St Ignatius Bryanchaninov, published in 1857; and a five-volume translation into Russian (Dobrotolyubie) by St Theophan the Recluse, published in 1877. Note that the edition prepared by St Theophane the Recluse has omitted some sections of the original 1782 *Philokalia* (primarily texts from St Peter of Damascus, Kallistos Katafygiotis, St Gregory Palamas, etc.) and added works from St Ephraim the Syrian, St Varsanouphius and St Theodoros the Studite, among others). In Romania, there is

the 12-volume publication of Fr Dumitru Staniloae (published within the period of 1946-1991); in the West, in wide circulations there are also Italian, Finnish, French, German and Arabic translations. So, one could ask why is this collection so important for the Orthodox?

One can highlight here the continuous reading and inspiration of monastics from *Philokalia*'s first time of publication till now. Many of these texts, were collected, read and commented upon by monastics in a disjointed form from their time of creation. But the *Philokalia* as a bound collection of texts created, soon after its first publication, a line of readers and major interpreters (both in terms of theological Schools, and in a more practical -teacher to student, spiritual father to spiritual son- way within specific monastic communities) that have influenced Orthodox spirituality in many countries.[9] But why all these people read and got inspired by these texts? With my work here, I will try to throw some light on this aspect of *Philokalia*, by focusing on the people who made this collection of texts and the cultural, philosophical and theological, environment that produced it. My aim is not only to elucidate the philosophical and theological intricacies of this cultural environment, but also connect it to the writings of St Gregory Palamas (note that the connection to St Gregory Palamas is supported by many notable Orthodox theologians; one could mention here

9. See G. E. H. Palmer, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Philip Sherrard, *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, Volumes 1-4 (London: Faber and Faber, 1979-99); Kallistos, Metropolitan of Diokleia, *The inner unity of the Philokalia and its influence in East and West*, Athens: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2004 (in: http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/wear_innerunity.html, accessed 09/06/2020); Fr Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present*, InterVarsity Press, 2015.

Fr John Romanides, Fr George Florovsky, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, and Metropolitan Kallistos).[10]

It is my claim that only through this connection to Palamite corpus one can avoid the misinterpretations proposed by many (Orthodox and non-Orthodox) in both West and East. I will discuss some key points in these connections below.

Briefly summarised, the connections are: a) all of these Holy Fathers whose writings are compiled in the *Philokalia* are Fathers mentioned in the Palamite corpus in relation to compunction (*metanoia*), *nepsis* (purification of heart), ceaseless prayer of the heart, and the role divine *energeia* has in the perfection of these processes and in deification or glorification (some Fathers influencing Palamite thought on all of these issues more than others); b) the Saints responsible for the first publication of these texts were heavily influenced by St Gregory Palamas (they not only read, but tried to publish Palamite texts and make Palamas' philosophy and theology known to others) and were the spiritual sons of the monastic and cultural environment of the Hesychastic Athos that produced the Kollyvades movement- they lived and breathed within this cultural environment and they expressed its perspective regarding the present and the future of Orthodoxy; and c) the collection ends with texts from the direct students of St Gregory Palamas- this only intensifies the urgency and necessity of the reading and understanding of the Palamite corpus prior to the reading of the *Philokalia*: one, for example, can only ask why these students and not others? My text here can only offer introductory

10. See for example Metropolitan Kallistos Ware 2004 and Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, 'St Nikodimos and the Philokalia', in Dimitri Conomos and Graham Speake (eds), *Mount Athos the Sacred Bridge. The Spirituality of the Holy Mountain*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 69-121.

thoughts on all these relations and connections. I hope that in future works, I will embark in a deeper analysis regarding all these interconnections and cross-influences. I am hopeful that by the end of this work one can see why known attempts to "re-invent the wheel" in terms of approaching Philokalia cannot be successful, if alien to the climate and cultural environment that made this collection possible. In my wider cultural approach to *Philokalia* here I am not alone. Christos Yannaras also has made a similar claim.[11] I differ however, from Yannaras' approach in terms of the different interpretation of the cultural specifics of the Kollyvades movement that I follow.

2. Some introductory remarks about the 1782 publication of *Philokalia*

The term "Philokalia" was a term favoured by St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus) to entitle their collections of notable mystical theological texts of Origen (c. 184-c.253). St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (1749 -1809) and St Makarios (Notaras), Bishop of Corinth (1739-1805) published their new *Philokalia* in Venice in 1782 with a generous donation from the Prince of Moldavia Mavrokordatos. St Nikodemos tried to publish in Vienna a collection similar to this earlier, together with a critical edition of key works of St Gregory Palamas, but the manuscripts were destroyed by Austrian police that caused a fire at the Publisher's premises, in their effort to confiscate and destroy the writings of the Greek revolutionary Rigas Feraios

11. See Metropolitan Kallistos 2004 and 2005; also Χ. Γιανναράς, *Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη νεότερη Ελλάδα*, Αθήνα: εκδ. Δόμος 1992.

(1757-1798). St Makarios gave his own manuscript with a similar collection of texts to St Nikodemos to correct and edit shortly before 1780 during a visit to Mt Athos. It is these texts that we see in the first edition of 1782 (of 5 volumes). St Makarios' texts are based primarily on these codices: codex 472 (12th century), codex 605 (13th century), codex 476 (14th century), codex 628 (14th century) and codex 629 (15th century) that were discovered at the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, not long before 1780, and contained key texts from notable *Neptic* and Hesychastic Fathers. As St Nikodemos notes, in his Introduction to the 1782 edition (omitted in the English translation), these writings (that represent Patristic thinking of more than a thousand years) describe, in a practical way, the ascetic method of purifying the mind and the heart through the "treasury of watchfulness" (*νήψεως ταμεῖον*), so that it can attract the grace of God through the ceaseless prayer of the heart, a familiar practice of the Athonite hesychasts. Before discussing the key content and interpretations of *Philokalia*, I will turn my attention to the Kollyvades movement and their impact.

3. The Kollyvades movement and the two editors of *Philokalia*

The Kollyvades movement is a very significant movement of clerics and monastics that soon enough was joined by a parallel movement of lay Orthodox, striving to preserve the essence, meaning and practices of Orthodoxy as given by the Holy Fathers. For many commentators and scholars they caused a *Philokalic Renaissance* of Orthodox Culture, Philosophy and Theology, which opposed Greek and other European Enlightenment writ-

ers.[12] The Kollyvades Fathers, were, in their majority, persecuted during their life, and only long after their death they were recognised collectively as Saints; their feast day is six days after the Holy Pascha (Orthodox Easter). Their name comes from *Kollyva* (*κόλλυβα* or the boiled grains that are offered during a memorial service) and it was given to them for their insistence that memorial services with *kollyva* should not take place on a Sunday (because on a Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus), but preferably on Saturday, in which we commemorate the souls of the departed. After a brief overview of the life and cultural environment of some of the key representatives of the Kollyvades, I will discuss the issue about the *Kollyva* in more detail and the various interpretations of the Kollyvades movement. Some of the key representatives of the Kollyvades movement are the following:

St. Kosmas Aitolos (1714-1779), who travelled throughout Greece trying to return the Greek speaking peasants to their faith, and preached frequent communion. He studied at the Athoniada School of Mt Athos (where he was influenced by St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites) and became monk at Philotheou Monastery of Mt Athos in 1759. He was sent by the Ecumenical Patriarch Serapheim II in 1760 to Western Greece to preach and support the local inhabitants in their Orthodoxy (these areas were ruthlessly occupied by the Ottoman Turks, who were forcing the locals to become Muslims). He remained in Western mainland Greece till his murder in 1779 by the Turks, except for a short visit at the Ionian islands in 1777 (where he remained only for a short time, because the Venetians demanded him to depart from the

12. Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς, *Η φιλοκαλική αναγέννησι του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της* (Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή - Χορν, 1984).

Ionian islands by the end of the same year, due to his criticism of their religious practices and beliefs). According to historical evidence he helped build more than 1000 primary schools and 200 secondary schools, primarily in Epirus.[13] In his many sermons (some of distinct prophetic character), which were preserved due to the efforts of his many followers, one can see his serious Orthodox theological education, but also his simplistic and realistic approach to daily social issues of the times. He preached for the equality of the genders and for the obligation of all to care for the poor, weak and the sick. He also attacked the powerful and the rich of his time asking them to repent and stop taxing the poor. In his sermons, one can see how the Orthodox message of the Kollyvades Fathers had a distinct social and cultural agenda.[14]

St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites (1689-1784) was a notable teacher and director of Athoniada School of Mt Athos, and a monk of Kafsokalyvia (Skete of Holy Trinity at Mt Athos). He went and taught at theological schools in Romania (Bucharest and Transylvania), after being persecuted at Mt Athos, while one of the leaders of the Kollyvades movement. He wrote many theological and philosophical works, amongst which most representative are: *Apodeictic Treatise on Frequent Communion* (1766; some claim that this work was influenced by a similar work from the Roman-Catholic monk Michel de Molinos, published in Rome in 1675,

13. Στ. Παπαθεμελή, *Η κοινωνική διάσταση των διδαχών του Κοσμά Αιτωλού, Το άλας της γης, περί Ορθοδοξίας και Πολιτικής* (Αθήνα: έκδ. Παρουσία, 1999).
14. See G. Podskalsky, *Η Ελληνική Θεολογία επί Τουρκοκρατίας 1453-1821. Η Ορθοδοξία στη σφαίρα επιρροής των δυτικών δογμάτων μετά τη Μεταρρύθμιση*, μετάφραση πρωτοπρ. Γ. Δ. Μεταλληνός (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης, 2005) [Original in German: *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrschaft (1453-1821): die Orthodoxie im Spannungsfeld der nachreformatorischen Konfessionen des Westens*, (München: C.H. Beck, 1988)].

but there is no similarity in content nor any common spiritual orientation); *Commentaries on Aristotle's works*; *Commentaries on Lucian's works on Friendship and on Tyranny and Commentaries on Thucydides' and Plutarch's works*; various treatises against the Calvinists.[15]

St. Paisius Velichkovsky (1722-1794), who published the Slavonic version of the *Philokalia*, with great influence on the Optina Elders. St Paisius after moving to various monastic communities in Russia and Romania, arrived at Mt Athos in 1746 and he soon led a community of monks at the Skete of Prophet Elias there. In 1763, he moved to Moldavia with sixty-four monks. Due to war activities in his area, he moved to Neamț Monastery in 1779, where he established a community of more than 700 monks, establishing a Greek school so that he can complete his translation of *Philokalia* through the help of his students. His influence on Romanian and Russian hesychasm is extremely important. Many monasteries in the wider areas of Moldavia and Vlachia were founded by his followers. Till now the monastic community of Neamț has a strong hesychastic character with many sketes and many monks from this area visiting Mt Athos frequently. Many of the famous Elders of Optina were his followers and indeed the revival of monasticism in Optina during the 19th c. has been attributed to his work. St Herman of Alaska brought with him St Paisius' translation of the *Philokalia* in Alaska influencing many hesychasts there as well.[16]

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15. See Γεώργιος Θ. Γιαννόπουλος, *Νεόφυτος Καυσοκαλυβίτης ο εκ Πατρών διδάσκαλος του Γένους* (Πάτραι 1992).
16. See Schema-Monk Metrophanes, *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky*, trans. by Fr. Seraphim Rose (St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994 [1976]).

St. Makarios (Notaras) of Corinth (1731-1805), one of the two editors of *Philokalia*, was one of the leaders in the Kollyvades movement. His family (Notaras) was an old and prestigious family in Corinth (with family ties to the Byzantine Empire and the Palaiologoi). After his election at the Metropolis of Corinth in 1764, he participated at the failed Orlov revolt against the Turks in the Peloponnese (1770), and, as a result, he fled to Corfu; he soon started visiting the Ionian and Aegean islands (he met St Nikodimos in Hydra in 1773), gathering manuscripts and meeting monastics and higher clergy; in 1777, he visits Mt Athos, shortly after the Kollyvades movement started its operation. His refusal to do a Memorial Service at the Monastery of Koutloumousiou on a Sunday was the start of the Kollyvades discussions around the typicon and proper order of services in the Orthodox Church, seeking to purify the Orthodox services from Western and non-Orthodox influences. During this visit in Mt Athos, he gives his manuscript of the *Philokalia* collection of texts to St Nikodemos to correct and edit. Soon after the controversy started, St Makarios leaves Mt Athos at the request of the monastic community there and goes to Chios, where he received an official letter of rebuke from the Patriarch for the turmoil he caused at Mt Athos. He stays in Chios till his death, writing, editing and publishing works amongst which the most representative are: *Treatise on frequent Communion* in 1777 (this according to Monk Theokletos Dionysiatis belongs to St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites, who, by that time, had left Mt Athos and Greece seeking refuge in Romania- see above); the *Philokalia* together with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, and *Evergetinos* (with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos) in 1783. One aspect of his life that is worthy of mention is his charitable work in Chios and other islands, donating money for

scholarships and building schools. It is also important to note that he paid for the education of the famous Greek intellectual Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), who became a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment and who was to become a major adversary to another proponent of the Kollyvades movement, St Athanasios Parios.[17]

St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1749-1809), a co-editor of Philokalia, and one of the three leading figures of the Kollyvades (together with St Makarios of Corinth and St Athanasios of Paros) was born in the island of Naxos, where he became a student of the brother of St Kosmas Aitolos, Archimandrite Chrysanthos, and later he went to the School of Smyrna, where he studied philosophy, medicine, finance and history and became expert in Latin, Italian and French. In 1770, he returned to Naxos and soon after (some stipulate through the influence of his mother, who became a nun, and St Makarios of Corinth) left for Mt Athos, where he became a monk in Dionysiou Monastery. One of his key tasks at the Monastery was the copying of codices and correspondence. He wrote many letters to other notable representatives of the Kollyvades (primarily St Makarios and St Athanasios) and compiled and published many theological and hesychastic texts, with the purpose of guarding the true Orthodox faith and securing its future against attacks from the West and the East. He wrote many treatises to vindicate the movement's aims and he received

17. See Podskalsky 2005; Αντ. Χαροκόπου, Αντ., *Άγιος Μακάριος Νοταράς, Μητροπολίτης Κορίνθου* (Αθήναι 2001); Στυλιανού Γ. Παπαδοπούλου, *Ο Άγιος Μακάριος Κορίνθου* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις «Ακρίτας», 2000); C. Cavarnos, *Athanasios Parios: St. Macarios of Corinth: Archbishop of Corinth. An account of his life, character, and message, together with selections from three of his publications* (Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 1977).

the wrath of many at Mt Athos and the Ecumenical Patriarchate (receiving an official condemnation by Patriarch Sophronios in 1776). In all his treatises, letters and sermons, he maintains a strong stance against contaminations of the Orthodox faith and practices from Roman Catholic and Protestant practices and beliefs. He also was against what he perceived as a materialism that he believed infiltrated the Church and he strongly supported hesychastic practices and the ceaseless prayer of the heart. He was recognised as a Saint in 1955 by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, after a petition by the Monastic Community of Mt Athos, and his Church feast is on 14th of July. Amongst his key ascetical, hagiological, and exegetical works (which preach a spirit of penance, poverty, purity and obedience) are the following: *Philokalia* and *Evergetinos* (with St Makarios of Corinth), *Treatise on continuous Holy Communion* in 1778, *Unseen Warfare* in 1796 (some claim that it follows the book *Spiritual Combat* of the Roman Catholic monks Lorenzo Scupoli or J. P. Pinnamonti, but they do not recognise the significant differences both in content and spiritual perspective),[18] *Spiritual Exercises* in 1785 (some claim that it is a translation of a book by the same title of the Roman Catholic monk Ignatius Loyola, again without recognising the significant differences in content and spiritual perspective),[19] the *Rudder* in 1793 (which is a detailed account and interpretation of all canons of the Orthodox Church and is still in wide use among Orthodox monastics and clergy), *Confession of Faith* (offering a response to his critics and accusers and defending his brothers the Kollyvades, propounding the canonical order of the Church, and addressing such issues as the meaning of *kollyva*, the

18. See π. Θεοδώρου Ζήση, *Κολλυβαδικά* (Θεσσαλονίκη: εκδ. Βρυέννιος, 2004).
19. See π.Θεοδώρου Ζήση 2004.

proper time for the celebration of Memorial Services, the special prerogatives due to Sunday, the theology of the divine Eucharist and the frequency of Holy Communion), and *Christoethia* (or in English, *The ethos of Christ*). Note that this work (together with other works of St Nikodemos) has been seriously misinterpreted by many Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars; here *ethos* (*ἦθος*, *ἔθος*, plurals: ethe *-ἤθη-ἤθεα*) is a Greek word, originally meaning "accustomed place" (see *ἤθεα ἵππων* "the habitat of horses" in the *Iliad* 6.511); *ethos* also has the meaning of "custom" or "habit", and later took the meaning of moral habit or moral character; *Christoethia* however, is not a moral treatise, but has a wider philosophical, cultural and theological aim in the wider transformation of the life of the faithful. This work of St Nikodemos, according to Monk Theokletos Dionysiates, gives testimony to the sanctity, wisdom, and breadth of knowledge of St Nikodemos.[20]

St. Athanasios Parios (1721-1813), one of the three leaders of the Kollyvades movement, received fierce criticisms and persecution not only from groups of monastics and clergy (who opposed the Kollyvades movement), but also from groups of Greek intellectuals, most characteristically Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment. After he received his primary education in Paros, he left for Smyrna (1745) and later he studied at the Athoniada School of Mt Athos (1751) as a student of Evgenios Voulgaris (1716-1806) and St Neofytos Kafsokalyvites. Voulgaris taught him philosophy and rhetoric and St Neofytos Greek grammar and syntax. It is significant that he had Voulgaris as a teacher, because Voulgaris,

20. See Μοναχού Θεοκλήτου Διονυσιάτου, *Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης και η Νεονικολαϊτική Σχολή* (Γουμένισσα: έκδ. Ι. Κοινοβίου Οσίου Νικοδήμου, 2002).

even though a member of the clergy and a monastic (later on, he became a Bishop of Kherson in Ukraine) studied Philosophy and Natural Sciences at Padua and was a key representative of the Greek Enlightenment, trying to incorporate some of the European Enlightenment ideas in his teaching at Athoniada and later at the Great School of Constantinople. Actually for his radical ideas regarding Orthodoxy he had to flee to Romania (Bucharest and Vlachia), Germany (where he published books and started writing against the Unites there, who persecuted him) and then to Russia in 1761-2, accepting a patronage by the Empress Catherine II, and dying in St Petersburg (Alexander Nevsky Lavra) in 1806 (after becoming for a few years Bishop of Kherson). For his work in Aristoteleian Philosophy, Mathematics, Newtonian Physics and Astronomy, he was elected a Fellow of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1776 and a Fellow of the Royal Society (UK) in 1788. So, St Athanasios Parios had first-hand knowledge of the European Enlightenment ideas (through the teaching of Evgenios Voulgaris) and he formed his views against them very early. After a brief teaching career at the School of Thessaloniki (which had to shut due to an epidemic), he moved to Corfu in 1760, where he studied physics with Nikephoros Theotokis (a graduate of the Universities of Padua and Bolonia). Nikephoros Theotokis was another key proponent of the Greek Enlightenment, and soon after, he left Corfu, and published a Physics book in Leipsig; he also was invited to take over the School of Iasi in Moldavia by Gregorios Gikas, who was a prince of Moldavia, lecturing there on Physics and Mathematics for a few years. After Romania, he went to Russia (receiving patronage by the Empress Catherine II), becoming an Archbishop of Slaviansk and Kherson (after

Voulgaris retired) and dying at the Monastery of St Daniil in Moscow in 1800.

In this way, St Athanasios Parios was taught about all the latest ideas of European Enlightenment (in Natural and Social Sciences and the Humanities) from two key Enlightenment intellectuals and scientists of his time: Voulgaris and Theotokis. They influenced him not only in the way he saw science and progress but also in his strong aversion to Roman Catholicism (both Voulgaris and Theotokis wrote extensively on the incompatibility of Orthodox and Roman Catholic beliefs and practices). The fact that both Theotokis and Voulgaris chose to die in Russia shows their disappointment with the way things were developing in Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They saw in mainland Greece an intellectual and cultural subjugation to the Turks and in Europe a subjugation to materialism and the Pope, forcing them to seek patronage in Russia. It also shows how complex was the intellectual and cultural scene in Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the time of the Kollyvades movement with proponents of both camps (the Kollyvades and the anti-Kollyvades) confronting each other openly in the corridors and the classrooms of the Schools where they were both teaching.[21] Soon after his studies with Theotokis, St Athanasios Parios goes to Mesologgi around 1764, to teach at the Palamas School of Mesologgi (which was founded by Panayotis Palamas, St Athanasios' fellow student while at Athoniada and a prominent member of the Palamas family of Mesologgi -note that Palamas as a surname in this family comes from the habit of many

21. Π. Μ. Κιτρομηλίδης, *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός* (Αθήνα: Μορφωτικό Ίδρυμα Εθνικής Τραπέζης 1996); Ζ. Μουρούτη-Γκενάκου, *Ο Νικηφόρος Θεοτόκης (1731-1800) και η συμβολή αυτού εις την παιδείαν του γένους*, (Αθήνα: Βιβλιοθήκη Σοφίας Ν. Σαριπόλου, 1979).

Macedonian families to take over the name Palamas, so as to honour the great St Gregory Palamas). After a short time, he is invited to take over the Athoniada School, as its Director, by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It is there at Mt Athos (shortly after 1770) that he meets the Kollyvades and St Makarios of Corinth, who convinces him to become a priest. Due to the influence from the Kollyvades and St Makarios of Corinth, he soon becomes the most strong supporter of the Kollyvades movement at Mt Athos, and as a result, he is expelled from the Athoniada School, his clergy status is withdrawn and he is condemned as a heretic (together with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites- later these excommunications and condemnations were rescinded). Between 1780 and 1786, he lives in Thessaloniki and he co-operates closely with St Nikodemos of Mt Athos in the collection and preservation of codices and editing a collection of the works of St Gregory Palamas (this collection was destroyed in Vienna, where it was sent to be published). In 1786, he departs for Paros, but due to war at the Aegean Sea during this time, he goes to Chios where he leads a School in co-operation with St Makarios of Corinth, producing many influential clerics and intellectuals. He dies there in 1813, at the Monastery of St George. He was recognised as a Saint by the Orthodox Church in 1995 and his feast day is on June 24. St Athanasios Parios wrote extensively and for many years supported the cultural rebirth of the Greek nation. His influence on St Nikodemos regarding the specifics of the collection of the texts in the *Philokalia* is extremely important. St Athanasios Parios wrote on various topics (primarily on theology and philosophy, educational textbooks and poems) and his most prominent works are: *The Teachings of the Fathers* (where he attacks the ideas of European Enlightenment -especially Voltaire and atheism- and

to which Korais responded with *The Teachings of the Brothers*), a *Treatise on St Gregory Palamas and St Marcos Eugenicos*, *Ethos and Tradition*, *Exposition of Orthodox Faith*, *Manual of Apologetics*, *Lives of Saints* (including of St Gregory Palamas). His biographers stress that even though he attacks in his works many of the ideas of European Enlightenment (and especially the ideas of Voltaire and other French, German and British Enlightenment thinkers in their atheistic and nationalistic aims), he puts forward a more cultural vision of Orthodoxy, which tries to unite all Orthodox under the same cultural nexus of traditional approaches to social and political life and behaviour. His idea of tradition was not a negation of all that is new (as Korais accused him of doing), but a selection from the new ideas with strict cultural criteria, so that they can be compatible with the Orthodox Christian life and beliefs. In his works, he uses a few European ideas (often recognising them as such in his writings) and he does not hesitate to translate into Greek various European texts that he finds are relevant to his discussion; for St Athanasios Parios, the Orthodox can have both a secular and a religious philosophy and through the Fathers they can find solutions for the serious problems of (secular) philosophy, whereas Enlightenment thinkers cannot, because they disregard the patristic tradition (and so cannot be inspired to overcome the dead-ends of European Enlightenment philosophy).[22]

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22. See Διονύσιος Βαλαής, *Πτυχές από την πνευματική κίνηση στον υπόδουλο και τον παροικιακό Ελληνισμό κατά την περίοδο του 18ου-19ου αιώνα* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Πουρναράς, 2005); Μητροπολίτου Μαυροβουνίου Αμφιλοχίου Ράντοβιτς, *Η φιλοκαλική Αναγέννηση του XVIII και XIX αι. και οι πνευματικοί καρποί της* (Αθήνα: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή – Χορν 1984); π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού, "Παράδοση και Γένος στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο τον Πάριο", in: *Ο Άγιος Αθανάσιος ο Πάριος, 1721-1813: Πρακτικά Πνευματικού Συμποσίου (Χίος, 6-7 Ιουλίου 2002)*, (Αθήνα: 2004), 33-43; π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού, *Τουρκοκρατία- Οι Έλληνες*

Notable other Kollyvades are St. Nicephoros of Chios (1750-1821), who was a student and biographer of St. Athanasius of Paros, and he became teacher and spiritual father of many neo-martyrs in Chios and the Peloponnese, and St. Arsenios of Paros (1800-1877), who was also a schoolteacher, and the spiritual father of St. Nectarios of Aegina, (1846-1920), who was Bishop of Pentapolis and Head teacher at the Rizareion Ecclesiastical Academy (a theological academy producing many Bishops and Metropolitans in contemporary Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate).

Overall, the two groups (Kollyvades and anti-Kollyvades) had their own etiquette, their own way of doing things, their own method of thinking and acting towards each other and ways of understanding their role in the cultural environment of their time. The two main camps in the debates were soon incorporated into centuries long philosophical and cultural demarcations with the names of *Palaiofilosofoi* (old philosophers) and *Neofilosofoi* (new philosophers). Note the title they favoured in their exchanges (related to Philosophy; this is how they saw what they were doing). The *Palaiofilosofoi* were faithful to the Fathers and they were using primarily ancient Greek Philosophy texts (including commentaries created in Byzantine times). Their key representatives were St Nikephoros Kafsokalyvites and Patriarch Samouel Chatzeris (1700-1775). The *Neofilosofoi* (new philosophers) were

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στην οθωμανική αυτοκρατορία (Αθήνα: εκδ. Ακρίτας, 2008); Κ. Παπουλίδη, "Περίπτωσις πνευματικής επιδράσεως του Αγίου Όρους εις τον βαλκανικόν χώρον κατα τον 18ον αιώνα", *Μακεδονικά*, 9, 1969, 278-294; Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Harvard University Press, 2013); Paschalis M. Kitromilides, ed., *Adamantios Korais and the European Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010); Γ.Β. Δερτιλής και Κ. Κωστής (επιμέλεια), *Θέματα νεοελληνικής ιστορίας (18ος-20ος αιώ στα Βαλκάνια τον 19ο αιώνα* (Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο 1980).

post Byzantine intellectuals who went to Italy, France, Germany, and Britain and brought back new ideas (empiricism of Locke, atheism of Voltaire, Cartesian ideas, Kantian rigidity of moral law etc.). Their key representatives were Evgenios Voulgaris, Iosipos Moisiodax, Adamantios Koraes. Both groups (in their majority) tried to remain faithful to Christian dogma, with varied levels of success. Both groups vowed to cause a rebirth of Orthodox spirituality under Turkish occupation through education (they saw this as the only way to get out of Turkish rule and the only way for Orthodox to survive in non-Orthodox Europe). Key protagonists from both groups had Evgenios Voulgaris as their teacher (e.g., St Athanasios Parios, Iosipos Moisiodax). Their battleground were the Schools of Constantinople, Patmos, Smyrna, Ioannina, Athens, Thessaloniki, Kozani, Holy Mt Athos (Athoniada School of Vatopaidi), some of these schools having the academic standing of today's Universities. A key date in the philosophical aspect of the debates was 1798, when St Athanasios Parios published *Pateriki Didaskalia* (attacking European Enlightenment, atheism, and liberalism) and Adamantios Koraes responding with *Adelfiki Didaskalia*. Embracers of *Neofilosofoi* can be found primarily at the Univ. Schools of Smyrna, Bucharest, Ioannina, Milies of Thessaly. Overall, the Orthodox Church was hesitant to take sides in this demarcation of camps due to French Revolution ideas in some key *Neofilosofoi*. An example is the notable *Neofilosofos* writer, Regas Feraios 1757-1798, who is famous for his early Greek Revolution Constitutions. He taught in Thessaly, were he was born, but took refuge to Vatopaidi Monastery after being persecuted by Turks in the area where he was born. He later went to Bucharest, where he came into contact with the ideals of French Revolution and became their strong supporter and Vienna where he published a

newspaper and books of a revolutionary character. He tried to see Napoleon and ask him to personally intervene so that the Greek will be liberated from the Turks, only to be betrayed by one of his companions and be delivered to the Turkish Ottoman Governor of Belgrade by the Austrian authorities, and eventually be murdered and thrown in the Danube river. Note that the Orthodox Church was hesitant to support the *Palaiofilosofoi*, because of the fierce criticism of major Orthodox hierarchs by the Kollyvades (who most of them can be clearly demarcated as *Palaiofilosofoi*).[23]

4. The Issue of the Kollyva

The beginning of the dispute is around 1754. At that time the monks of Skete of St Anna, who had increased in numbers, decided to build a larger Church (Kyriakon) and they called for donors. In the presence of many donors, the monks did vigils and memorial services with *kollyva* (for the dead donors), as it was the custom on a Saturday. The list of the names of dead donors was so long however, that the monks could not finish the services in time to be able to go to the market at Karyes and sell what they produced at the Skete. So, for as long as they built the main Church (Kyriakon) they worked 6 days and they did the memorials on the Sunday (where they ceased from all work). This decision was not taken unanimously and soon enough there were two groups of monks at the Skete: those in favour of having memorial services on a Sunday and those against. This opposition soon spread to all other monasteries and Sketes in Mt Athos and it soon encompassed all who were in favour of bringing innovation in Mt Athos and all

23. See π. Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού 2008.

who were against, trying to keep to the faith and practices of old monks and the hesychasts. Other issues became as important in the debates (for example the frequency of Holy Communion) and the turmoil lasted around 60 years in total. The first intervention of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was in 1772 with a letter-decree of Patriarch Theodosios II, in which he stated that those who did the memorial services on Saturday, they follow the "ancient" tradition and those who do them on a Sunday, with permission from the Abbot, are not committing a sin (*οὐχ ὑπέκεινται κρίματι*). The peace that was brought in Mt Athos with this letter was short lived and his successor at Ecumenical Patriarchate, Patriarch Samuel I Chatzeris (1773-1774) decreed that the monks should obey their Abbots and senior monastic council and avoid all confrontation on this issue. But the peace with this was also short lived. As a result, a Council took place at Mt Athos deciding that all those who did not agree with the Decree of 1773 should be excommunicated and asked the Ecumenical Patriarchate to take the necessary measures. But even this was not enough to silence the Kollyvades. Soon, another Council took place, this time at Constantinople in 1776, with Ecumenical Patriarch Sophronios II, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and sixteen other Bishops and Metropolitans. This Council decided that the memorials can take place either on a Saturday or on a Sunday and excommunicated St Athanasios Parios, St Neophytos Kafsokalyvites and St Nikodemos of Mt Athos. After a few decades the excommunication was nullified. In 1819, a Council in Constantinople cancelled the excommunications and approved the view of Kollyvades that both the clergy and the lay Orthodox Christians should have frequent Holy Communion. At the same year, the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregorios V wrote a letter to the monastic community of Mt Athos advising them that

they should have Holy Communion whenever anyone feels ready for it (after Holy Confession and spiritual and physical preparation through a fast). This went against the views of some notable Anti-Kollyvades of the time (like Vessarion of Rapsani †1801 and Theodoritos of Ioannina †1823, who were claiming that monks and lay Orthodox should have Holy Communion only on major feasts and infrequently).[24]

5. Interpretations of the Kollyvades Movement

Most of the theologically oriented commentators would agree that: "No single debate, after the Hesychastic Controversy in the fourteenth century, had such an impact on the life of the Holy Mountain as the Kollyvades Controversy".[25] But there are some Orthodox theology scholars who claim that Kollyvades were an ultra-conservative group of traditionalists that were only concerned with specific rituals and had no higher aims in theology.[26] In this way, they downplay their relationship to Hesychasts and claim that there is no direct connection nor a relationship of some kind to the Hesychasts.[27] On the other hand, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović (of

24. Χ. Τζώγας, Χ., *Η περί μνημοσύνων έρις εν Αγίω Όρει κατά τον ΙΗ› αιώνα*, Διδακτορική Διατριβή, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης (ΑΠΘ), (Σχολή Θεολογική, Τμήμα Θεολογίας, Αριστοτέλειο Παν. Θεσσαλονίκης, 1969) (found in: https://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/23473, accessed 15/06/2020); Hieromonk Patapios and Archbishop Chrysostomos, *Manna from Athos: The Issue of Frequent Communion on the Holy Mountain in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006).
25. Hieromonk Patapios and Archbishop Chrysostomos 2006, Section 2 of Part I.
26. Τζώγας 1969, 141-3.
27. Τζώγας 1969, 142.

Montenegro), Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Fr Theodoros Zisis, Fr Georgios Metallinos, Professor Chrestos Yannaras (among others) seem to support the majority of the commentators on finding a strong connection between the Hesychasts and the Kollyvades (however, note my disagreement with Yannaras regarding St Nikodemos of Mt Athos later on in this work).[28] For some commentators, the Kollyvades movement is the expression par excellence of the Hesychastic spirit in the 18th and 19th c. According to Archimandrite Gabriel (1886–1983), Abbot of the Monastery of Dionysiou on Mount Athos, "the Kollyvades movement produced fruits which, both in quality and in quantity, surpassed all other periods of Hagiorite life".[29]

I would like to stress that it is a mistake to think that the Kollyvades movement had limited influence and impact, which only exercised influence on certain monastic and clergy circles. Their impact engulfed all Orthodox oriented culture of the 18th, 19th and 20th c., throughout the Balkans and beyond, with traceable influences even today. Alexandros Papadiamantis (1851-1911), a notable literary figure of 19th c., for many, is the fruit of the Kollyvades movement. He grew up in Skiathos, an island where some important Kollyvades monastics came after their persecution from Mt Athos (most famous among them, Monk Nephon, Abbot and Founder of the Monastery of Annunciation). One can see this Kollyvades spirit most clearly not only in his treatment of monastics and clergy in his novels and short stories, but also in

28. See Metropolitan Kallistos 2004 and 2005; George S. Bebis, *Introduction to Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, in *Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain: A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, transl. by Peter A. Chamberas, (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989).
29. Αρχιμανδρίτου Γαβριήλ, *Λαυσαϊκόν του Αγίου Όρους* (Βόλος, 1953), 10.

his stern attack on Apostolos Makrakis, a Western minded religious writer of his time, who tried to introduce Western habits and customs in Orthodoxy (like Brotherhoods of non-clergy theologians etc.).[30] Together with Alexandros Moraitidis (1850-1929), another famous Greek novelist and poet, a member of the Academy of Athens (who died as a monk in Mt Athos), they preserved the Kollyvades movement ideas in the wider Greek culture and passed it on to their literary descendants in the 20th c. In their efforts, they maintained strong ties with clergy and monastics of Kollyvades spirit: Moraitides had as his spiritual father St Daniel Katounakiotes, and Papadiamantis and Moraitides were cantors at the Church of Prophet Elisaios in Monastiraki, with St Nikolaos Planas (1851-1932), as their priest. It is worthy of note that a parallel attack on Makrakis was initiated by Fr Philotheos Zervakos (1884-1980), who was an Abbot in the Monastery of Zoodochos Pigis Longovardas at Paros, joining the monastic community there through the guidance of St Nektarios of Aigina, soon becoming a key monastic representative of the Kollyvades movement in the 20th c, together with St Joseph the Hesychast (1898-1959) and many others.

6. Contents of *Philokalia*: indication of texts with key relevance to St Gregory Palamas texts

There are some texts from Philokalia that are either discussed in Palamas' works or have a direct key relevance to Palamite positions. So, of particular relevance to St Gregory Palamas are the

30. Μ. Μπέγζος, «Αλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης καί Απόστολος Μακράκης: «Αειπλάνητος Διδάχος» ή «Κοσμοκαλόγερος», *Νέα Κοινωνιολογία*, τχ. 27, 1999, 32-42.

following texts from *Philokalia* (I will follow for this the English translation edition of the *Philokalia*, where possible):

Volume 1

Introduction by St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (note that this does not exist in the English translation of the *Philokalia*), and the texts from St Anthony the Great (*On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life: 170 Texts*), St. Isaiah the Anchorite (*On Guarding the Intellect: 27 Texts*), St Evagrius of Pontus (*Texts on Discrimination in respect of Passions and Thoughts; On Prayer: 153 Texts*), St. Diadochos of Photiki (*On Spiritual Knowledge and Discrimination: 100 Texts*), St. John of Karpathos (*For the Encouragement of the Monks in India who had Written to Him: 100 Texts*; *Ascetic Discourse Sent at the Request of the Same Monks in India*).

Volume 2

Texts from St. Theodore of Edessa (*A Century of Spiritual Texts*; *Theoretikon*), St. Maximos the Confessor (*Four Hundred Texts on Love, with a foreword to Elpidios the Presbyter*; *Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God, written for Thalassios*; *Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice; On the Lord's Prayer*), St Thalassios of Libya (*On Love, Self Control, and Life in accordance with the Intellect, written for Paul the Presbyter*).

Volume 3

Texts from St. Philotheos of Sinai (*Forty Texts on Watchfulness*), St Ilias the Elder (*A Gnomic Anthology: Part I, Part II, Part III,*

Part IV), St. Theophanis the Monk (*The Ladder of Divine Graces*), St. Peter of Damascus (*Book I: A Treasury of Divine Knowledge, Book II: Twenty-Four Discourses*), St. Symeon the Metaphrastes (*Paraphrases of the Homilies of St. Macarius of Egypt; Spiritual Perfection*; *Prayer*; *Patient Endurance and Discrimination*; *The Raising of the Intellect*; *Love*; *The Freedom of the Intellect*).

Volume 4

St. Symeon the New Theologian (*On Faith*, *153 Practical and Theological Texts*; *The Three Methods of Prayer [attributed to him]),* Nikitas Stithatos (*On the Practice of the Virtues: One Hundred Texts*; *On the Inner Nature of Things and on the Purification of the Intellect: One Hundred Texts*; *On Spiritual Knowledge, Love and the Perfection of Living: One Hundred Texts*), St Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia (*On Inner Work in Christ and the Monastic Profession Texts*), St Nikiphoros the Monk (*On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart*), St. Gregory of Sinai (*On Commandments and Doctrines*; *Warnings and Promises*; *On Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and also on Stillness and Prayer: 137 Texts*; *On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, written for the Confessor Longinos, Ten Texts; On Stillness: Fifteen Texts; On Prayer: Seven Texts*), St. Gregory Palamas (*To the Most Reverend Nun Xenia*, *A New Testament Decalogue*, *In Defence of Those who Devoutly Practise a Life of Stillness*, *Three Texts on Prayer and Purity of Heart*, *Topics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life: 150 Texts*), *The Declaration of the Holy Mountain in Defence of Those who Devoutly Practice a Life of Stillness.*

Volume 5

In the Greek 5th Volume (not yet published into the English edition of the *Philokalia*) of interest are: Texts from Kallistos and Ignatios Xanthopouloi (*Method and precise canon for those who choose the hesychastic and monastic life: 100 chapters*), Kallistos Angelikoudis (*Kefalaia (Chapters): 81 chapters*), Kallistos Tilikoudis, presumed the same as Kallistos Angelikoudis (On Hesychastic Practice), Kallistos Katafygiotis, presumed the same as Kallistos Angelikoudis (*On union with God, and Life of Theoria*), Saint Simeon Archbishop of Thessaloniki (*Chapters on the Sacred and Deifying prayer*), Saint Mark Eugenikos (*On the Words that are Contained in the Sacred Prayer*), Anonymous (*Interpretation of "Kyrie Eleison" -Lord Have Mercy*), Saint Simeon the New Theologian (*Discourse on Faith and teaching for those who say that it is not possible for those who find themselves in the worries of the world to reach the perfection of the virtues, and narration that is beneficial at the beginning*; *On the Three Ways of Prayer*), St. Gregory of Sinai (*Excerpts from the life of St. Maximos Kafsokalivitis*), *All Christians Must Pray Uninterruptedly*.

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I note that I have selected the above texts because of their particular relevance to the Philosophy and Theology of St Gregory Palamas on the basis of two criteria: a) for works earlier than the Palamite corpus: frequency of citations and significance of key ideas from the selected Fathers to the work of Palamas and b) for works later than the Palamite corpus: the specific arguments of Palamas and their impact on his followers (for the majority of texts in the 5th Volume). Most, if not all, of the texts contained

in the *Philokalia* are relevant to Palamas scholars in some way or another. But the ones selected above are more directly relevant than others.

7. The Importance of the texts of *Philokalia*

Overall, one could summarise the importance of the texts of *Philokalia* in this way:

a) All the texts in the *Philokalia* have either influenced the hesychasts or are hesychastic in nature and in purpose. In this way, they can be regarded as mini-hesychastic treatises on their own and are an excellent introduction and further elucidation of hesychastic texts (with proper guidance and with the right attitude of mind and heart). They can be used as educational tools: they show how Orthodox spirituality should accompany appropriate Orthodox Ecclesiology and how Orthodox Ecclesiology should support and guide Orthodox spirituality and faith.

b) They also provide further evidence for the patristic nature of the writings of Palamas and his followers, defending Palamas against his accusers. Some Philokalic texts (esp. the ones written after Palamas) develop further the thinking of Palamas in areas such as Dogmatics, Liturgical life and practice, Ecclesiology and Eschatology. Note that during the 15th-17th c. there was a strong attack on Palamism and persecution by the Roman Catholic Church on all sympathisers of Palamism who wanted to publish or write in favour of Palamas. Protagonists in this were the Roman Catholic monks and theologians François Richard and D. Petau, in the middle of 17th c., who tried to ridicule hesychasm and Palamas in particular, repeating the arguments of Varlaam and his followers and forcing Migne in the 19th c. to apologise to his readers for including Palamas' and his followers' works in

Patrologia Graeca; see PG 151, pp. 551-2. An attempt to defend Palamism by the Bishop Gerasimos Vlachos (1607-1685, Abbot of Theotokos Monastery in Corfu and later a Metropolitan of Philadelpheia in Venice) had very limited impact in the West and repeated attempts in the early 17th c. (by Nikodemos Metaxas, 1585-1646, later an Archbishop of Cephalonia, Zante and Ithaca) to publish texts of Palamas in London, Greece and Constantinople were either blocked or sabotaged by Roman Catholic agents (some scholars actually claiming that Roman Catholic agents destroyed the printing machines that Metaxas tried to establish in Constantinople to publish there Palamas' texts).[31]

c) Most of them are mystical texts: they provide the opportunity to all readers to get the meaning and significance they need to have in their lives so that they can approach God and deal with important spiritual problems they may be faced with. As such, there will always be a difficulty in determining the true meaning of each *Philokalia* text. There is a need of guidance and a need of full immersion into the cultural environment that produced them. Effort must be made to examine each text within the cultural and theological context of the creation of each text and the cultural and theological context of the collection itself (more about this later on).

d) The views of four key modern day monastics who follow the Kollyvades spirit can summarise all the above: For Monk Theokletos Dionysiatis (1916-2006), *Philokalia* is a codified teaching of the Holy Orthodox Fathers, creating a codified unanimity (even though approaching topics from different backgrounds and in varied ways) in all aspects of spiritual life and Orthodox Theology. It protects the faithful from hypocrisy, false morality

31. See for more details Σταύρου Γιαγκάζογλου, "Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς και η Νεώτερη Δυτική Θεολογία", *Θεολογία*, 83, 3 (2012), 23-53.

and pretence that fill the mind with pride: "*Philokalia* means the love of the beautiful. The beautiful is Christ. Connection with Christ makes beautiful our life. *Philokalia* shows how this can be achieved.".[32] For Elder Efraim, Abbot of Vatopedi Monastery at Mt Athos, *Philokalia* is the *sine qua non* of Orthodox Theology and ecclesiastical life.[33] For Elder Georgios Kapsanis, Abbot of Gregoriou Monastery at Mt Athos, the importance of Philokalia Fathers of the 18th c. is seven fold: i) The Philokalia Fathers renewed the authentic Orthodox spiritual life, giving the example of living what they preached; ii) they resisted the alienation of Orthodox from their heritage and tradition that European Enlightenment brought upon them; iii) they supported the faith of the Orthodox during difficult times (ruthless occupation by the Turks and Roman Catholic/Protestant propaganda and proselytism) through valid and detailed apologetic works; iv) they inspired the Orthodox cultivating the ethos of neomartyrs; v) they showed through their honest and unequivocal persistence in the canons and the tradition of the orthodox Church that they were not bigots and sectarians (as they were accused), but that their only motivation was to hold themselves steadfast to their tradition; vi) they gave their own answer to important cultural and theological problems of their day: showed a way to unite *lex orandi* with *lex credendi*; vii) they supported the development of many saints both from within their ranks and within the wider readership of their texts.[34]

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32. Μοναχός Θεόκλητος Διονυσιάτης, "Εισαγωγή"*, Φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών*, μεταφρ. Αντώνιος Γαλίτης, (εκδ. Το περιβόλι της Παναγίας, 1986), α΄τόμος, 11-16.
33. Γέροντας Εφραίμ Βατοπαιδινός, *Διδαχές από τον Άθωνα – Η φιλοκαλία των Ιερών Νηπτικών ως προϋπόθεση της Ορθοδόξου θεολογίας και της εκκλησιαστικής ζωής*, 2020 (found in https://www.pemptousia.gr/2020/03/didaches-apo-ton-athona-i-filokalia-ton-ieron-niptikon-os-proipothesi-tis-orthodoxou-theologias-ke-tis-ekklisiastikis-zois/ accessed 19/06/2020).
34. Γέροντας Γεώργιος Καψάνης, *Φιλοκαλικοί Πατέρες του 18ου αιώνος*, 2013 (as found in https://www.pemptousia.gr/2013/07/filokaliki-pateres-tou-18ou-eonos/

> For Metropolitan of Montenegro Amphilochios the significance of *Philokalia* can be summarised in this: "What helps 'liberals' in their belief systems is the frequent lacking in eloquence on the part of traditionalists and their disability in justifying theoretically the traditional way of life. The *Philokalia* movement of the 18th c. is the potent weapon against the ruthless rationalism of the *Neofilosofoi*, because not only it is faithful to the typicon, but also explains and elaborates on the theory behind the rules and the significance of the symbols in ecclesiastical life. It is evident that behind the conflict between the two movements there is not just fiercely engaged rhetoric, but two different worldviews and historical and cosmological understandings of reality".[35]

In the next section, we will examine all this in more detail, focusing on some key interpretations of *Philokalia*.

8. Interpretations of *Philokalia*

Before I discuss some key Orthodox approaches to *Philokalia*, it would be interesting to see how some notable Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians interpreted the *Philokalia*. This will support further my claim that the Philokalia texts can only be properly understood within the cultural context and cultural environment that produced them and it will allow us to identify some key wrong approaches to it, helping in this way new researchers in

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accessed 19/06/2020). Also found in: *Μηνιαίο περιοδικό Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Πειραιώς, Πειραϊκή Εκκλησία*, έτος 18ο, αρ.φύλ. 205, Ιούνιος 2009.

35. Μητροπολίτης Αμφιλόχιος Ράντοβιτς, *Η δυναμική του Φιλοκαλικού Κινήματος*, 2015 (as found in https://www.pemptousia.gr/2015/07/i-dinamiki-tou-filokalikou-kinimatos/ ; accessed 19/06/2020).

their efforts to approach *Philokalia* with a balanced and appropriate methodology.

One of the key Roman Catholic approaches is the one produced by the Roman Catholic Jesuit monk I. Hausherr (1881-1978). He follows overall the approach to Hesychasm of the Monk Barlaam of Calavria (one of the key opponents of Hesychasm and St Gregory Palamas in the 14th c. and later a Roman Catholic Bishop of Gerace). He also seems to agree overall with the criticism on Palamas by the Roman Catholic scholar M. Jugie.[36] Hausherr finds that hesychastic prayer has no distinct theological meaning and significance and it only distracts the monks from prayer, causing them to have peculiar psychosomatic and pathological experiences.[37] He has influenced many with his approach and in some way he has influenced Gouillard, a French translator of *Philokalia*, who claimed that the Hesychastic prayer described in the texts of the *Philokalia* has attracted the attention of psychologists, among other scientists.[38] I would like to note in passing that there are discussions of how Orthodox theologians and philosophers can defend Palamism against these and other Roman Catholic arguments in a previous work.[39] In an interesting uptake of this interpretation, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newton, in West Newton MA, produced a small book with the

36. M. Jugie, "Palamite (Controverse)," in: M. Vacant et al., eds., *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, tome XI/2 (Paris: 1932), cols. 1777-1818.
37. Irenee Hausherr, *Méthode d'oraison hésychaste* (Edizioni Orientalia Christiana: 1927).
38. Jean Gouillard, Jean, ed., *Petite Philocalie de la prière du Coeur* (Points / Sagesses, 1953).
39. C. Athanasopoulos, ed., *Triune God: Incomprehensible but Knowable—The Philosophical and Theological Significance of St Gregory Palamas for Contemporary Philosophy and Theology* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

title "The Jesus Prayer" with the intention to guide the Roman Catholic youth on how to practice the hesychastic prayer on the basis of texts from the *Philokalia*. In the discussion of the theology behind the hesychastic prayer, the small book makes no mention of St Gregory Palamas and the great Hesychasts of 14th c.[40] Actually the only instance throughout the book (38 pages in total), that Palamas is mentioned by name is in relation to pan-en-theism: "To use the imagery of Gregory Palamas, God is like the sun. His rays permeate all of creation (pan-en-theism). He is a life-giving Spirit. When we move inside ourselves and remove the distractions of these false images and prophets who steal away our energy, we are filled with His life-giving rays."[41] Note that *panentheism* is used in contemporary philosophy to denote a peculiar philosophical position about God and as a term was proposed by Karl Krause (1781-1832): "Panentheism considers God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to both traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism seeks to avoid either isolating God from the world as traditional theism often does or identifying God with the world as pantheism does".[42] It would be an interesting project to refute the claims of Culp in his attempt to connect many Christian and non-Christian views with this term, and indeed to examine philosophically whether the application of this term on any Christian position is indeed plausible (phil-

40. RC Diocese of Newton, *The Jesus Prayer* (Franciscan Communications, no date) (as found in: https://melkite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Jesus-Prayer-Leaders-Guide.pdf ; accessed 17/06/2020), 4-7.
41. RC Diocese of Newton, *The Jesus Prayer*, 23.
42. John Culp, "Panentheism", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2017 as found in: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panentheism/ (accessed 17/06/2020).

osophically and theologically).[43] Suffice it to stress for now, that the understanding provided by the small Roman Catholic book is far from a correct understanding of *Philokalia*. Note that there is in this little book of Roman Catholic catechesis no humility of spirit, no compunction and no guidance from an experienced spiritual father (necessities that are the *sine qua non* according to all the Fathers of the *Philokalia* for allowing the Jesus Prayer to work). Note also that the whole process metaphysically resembles the Neo-Platonist process of emanation, where there is no absolute freedom for God to refuse giving the grace and energy that is necessary to bring peace, calmness and ultimately deification to fruition.[44] The whole approach of the Roman Catholic small book is one of a self-help psychological manual for Roman Catholic religious young people, with no deeper understanding of *Philokalia* and its aims. In this way, it is just one example of how misinterpretation of key passages from *Philokalia* can lead people astray and likely cause more psychosomatic problems than solve any.

Another attempt at an interpretation of a key Father from the *Philokalia* was carried out by the Most Revd. Rowan Williams, previously an Archbishop of Canterbury and now Baron Williams of Oystermouth, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Chancellor of the University of South Wales. I will examine some of his views on the *Philokalia* Fathers, as expressed in his small book *Silence and Honey Cakes - The wisdom of the desert*.[45] In this

43. As found in Culp 2017.
44. See my Introduction in C. Athanasopoulos, ed., *Orthodox Mysticism and Asceticism: Philosophy and Theology in the Work of St Gregory Palamas* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), where I discuss this issue in more detail.
45. Rowan Williams, *Silence and Honey Cakes - The wisdom of the desert*, 2013 (as found in: *Το μυστικό της ερήμου –Έχει να πει κάτι σήμερα το Ιεροντικό;*

small booklet, which is based on a series of lectures he gave in 2001 at the John Main Seminary, an annual Conference organised by the World Community for Christian Meditation, in Sydney, he examines some key Desert Fathers (some of them included in the *Philokalia*, wishing to explore the spiritual dimension of their work. In discussing St Anthony the Great (1st vol. of *Philokalia*), he notes that our relationship with God is inherently connected to the way we handle those who are around us. He focuses his attention to the famous saying of St Anthony the Great: "Life and death depend on our neighbour. If we gain our brother we gain God. But if we scandalise our brother we are sinning against God" (PG 65, 77; *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Anthony, 9). This is a much quoted text of St Anthony, which taken in isolation, makes St Anthony a supporter of a Western-style Christian Social Ethical system that places the welfare and wellbeing of our neighbours at a pedestal, confirming in many ways the much quoted in the West Christian social and moral principle of *laborare est orare*, or *Labora est Ora, Ora est Labora* (because it is through work that we can benefit others). This brings to mind the often discussed (esp. in the West) interpretation of the *Rule* of St Benedict, on exactly this point.[46] In many of the sayings of St Anthony, preserved in the *Philokalia* (and the *Gerontikon*), we see St Anthony expressing ideas that go against the much quoted text cited above by Williams. Examples are the following: in the first volume of the Philokalia (*On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life: 170 Texts*), we have St Anthony advising that for the people who are

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Μετάφραση: Χρήστος Μακρόπουλος, Αθήνα: εκδ. Εν Πλω, 2017).

46. William Edmund Fahey, , ed., *The Foundations of Western Monasticism: The Life of Saint Anthony of the Desert. The Holy Rule of Saint Benedict, and the Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride* (Saint Benedict Press, TAN Books, 2013).

guided by their *logikon* "there is no need to disperse their attention to the company of men, but only choose and approach those people that are conducive to their progress and in particular those that are guided by the will of God. It is only in this way that people can progress in their spiritual life according to God and the eternal light" (text 24). St Anthony also (at the same collection of sayings) notes that we should not be concerned about whether people in this world like us, or appreciate what we do, or acknowledge and appreciate our work: "Those who know God, are filled with all good thoughts, and, because they are after the heavenly things, they disregard the earthly ones. These people are not liked by many, nor they like the many. And for this not only they are hated, but they are also laughed at, by the many fools..." (text 53). As one can understand, this (Palamite and Kollyvades inspired) *Philokalia* perspective on St Anthony's dicta has nothing to do with many Christian Social and Ethical systems that we see in the West. Actually, what we can see in Williams' work *Silence and Honey Cakes* is that Williams uses his interpretation of St Anthony to support his own Christian Social Ethical system (discussed by scholars as an Ethics of Recognition and Non-Competitiveness), and he does not seem to be interested in the *Philokalia* perspective at all. This appropriation of Desert Fathers' texts is not without its critics in the West and Williams has received criticisms by both Anglican and non-Anglican Christians for decisions he has taken while an Archbishop of Canterbury, while following his own Christian Social Ethics.[47] In any case, what I wish to stress

47. See for his Christian Social Ethics views the work: Rowan Williams, "On Making Moral Decisions," *Anglican Theological Review*, LXXXI:2, 1999, 295-308; see also Sarah Moses, "The Ethics of "Recognition": Rowan Williams's Approach to Moral Discernment in the Christian Community", *Journal of the*

here is the fact that, when one takes a *Philokalia* Father out of the context of *Philokalia*, they are open to challenges of serious misinterpretation.

So, with the interpretations put forward so far (both from Christian perspectives manifestly non-Orthodox) one can see why, from the very early years of its publication, *Philokalia* has been criticised as a mishmash of Fathers with no coherent meaning as a whole nor any unified approach in bringing the various *Philokalia* Fathers together. Many scholars coming from the Roman Catholic and the Protestant perspectives find (for example) that there is serious conflict between Evagrios of Pontos and Symeon the New Theologian, or between Anthony the Great and Theodoros the Studite or Gregory of Sinai. What these scholars tend to overlook is the common attitude of all *Philokalia* Fathers towards prayer and interior spiritual life, an insistence that monks are not going to the Desert or a monastery to be likeable and social, but to unite with God. What they forget is that these are the Fathers that inspired the Hesychasts in their humble greatness. Lossky (among other Orthodox Theologians) has highlighted this interior connection of the Fathers of *Philokalia*. According to his view, with works such as the *Philokalia* one can see very clearly why for the East Orthodox mysticism and Orthodox theology cannot be distinguished: mysticism here has to be theological and theology has to be mystical.[48] According to St Nikodemos of Mt Athos (as one can see in his Introduction at the original Venice edition):

Society of Christian Ethics, Volume 35, Number 1, 2015, 147-165.

48. V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London 1957), 8-9; see also Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, "Christian Theology in the East 600-1453", in Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, ed., *A History of Christian Doctrine*, (Bloomsburry, 2006), 181-226.

What is being revealed to us through the texts of the *Philokalia* is the Kingdom of God that can be found within our hearts (in his texts he cites here Luke 17:21; Matthew 13:44).

But it would be helpful to see whether the Greek scholarship on the *Philokalia* are united in their understanding of this important cultural achievement of modern Orthodoxy. I will investigate two examples of how interpretations of Philokalia have caused major controversy in recent scholarship and, ultimately, where, and how these interpretations were wrong.

I will begin with the relatively recent work of Stellios Ramfos (born in 1939). In his work *The unthinkable nothing. Philokalic roots of the neo-hellenic nihilism* (*Το αδιανόητο τίποτε. Φιλοκαλικά ριζώματα του νεοελληνικού μηδενισμού*, 2010), Ramfos attacks the *Philokalia* Fathers (as a whole and the editors of the original work in particular) as being responsible for all the problems that modern and contemporary Greece suffers from. For Ramfos, the inherent root of the problems started in the last phase of Byzantine Empire (having as a target here the hesychasts and in particular St Gregory Palamas) and the monastic and ecclesiastic tendency of the Orthodox Church throughout that period and under the Turkish Ottoman Rule, to remain enslaved to the concept of a symbolic communal person, and refrain from stepping out of the communal life and communal way of thinking. The previous 1000 years of Hellenic civilisation and its emphasis on the achievements of an educated individual was gradually forgotten and disregarded, and with the Hesychasts and the *Philokalic* Fathers. For Ramfos, the insistence that the Saints are persons in the full meaning of this word and all others are approximations of personhood and never fully persons threw the discourse into a gradual smothering of individuality and respect for individual differences. Ramfos

believes that what the *Philokalia* Fathers have shown with their impact on Hellenic culture and life in the last six-seven centuries is that when a symbolic person (such as the person of a Saint) has become a historical entity (as were all the Saints mentioned by the *Philokalia* and the Kollyvades Fathers), then all creative hermeneutic interpretations of this person cease and they become part of a codex of meaning that is a given once and for all. For Ramfos, in opposition to the person of a Saint, usual everyday people have simply become sinners, who should have continuously in their mind their sins and their creativity is engulfed and stifled in their repentance.

For Ramfos, this anthropology of a sinner promoted by the *Philokalia* and the Kollyvades Fathers, turned the East away from the egocentricity of the creative individual and poisoned Hellenic culture and life with a total pessimism about being a human. *Philokalia* as a corpus for Ramfos expresses our contemporary nihilistic attitudes towards humanity, a total lack of any anthropological dialogue, the distant way with which contemporary Greeks look upon historicity and historical issues and their fascination with the always distant heavenly rewards. According to Ramfos, the 1351 Synod and the publication of the Hagioreite Volume, meant the expulsion from any kind of historical role for the Church in the East and its arrest within the neo-platonic stereotypes of the social group that was dominating its operations. It stifled the renaissance spirit that Varlaam of Calabria and his followers tried to bring in the East and forced them to run to the West. Due to the nature of this work, I will not go into a detailed refutation of some of Ramfos' key claims (perhaps I will do this in a future work). Suffice it to say here that most of his claims have been repeated again and again in various Western commentaries

on the works of St Gregory Palamas and the Kollyvades (it actually provides support to my claim that Kollyvades and St Gregory Palamas belong in the same cultural context: Ramfos, among so many others, finds in both Kollyvades and St Gregory Palamas the same things to criticise). I will just cite one instance of his text to show how wrong his interpretation is and how (again) a lack of understanding of the *Philokalia* corpus and its meaning feeds serious misinterpretation. Towards the end of his book, Ramfos summarises his approach with this: "Orthodoxy is fed by the neo-platonic mysticism in many of its variants. As theology and ascetical life this mysticism starts with Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius of Pontus".[49] Note that both St Gregory of Nyssa and St Evagrius of Pontos would find Ramfos claims that their work provided the roots for a cultural arrest of the Greeks as bizarre to say the least. Both St Evagrius and St Gregorios were innovative in their own ways and both knew well and commented upon earlier philosophical and scientific accounts of the soul and body in a remarkable way. There were by no means against progress, as Corrigan (whom Ramfos cites frequently throughout his work) admits: "[...] they came to represent major strands of the legacy of the 4th Century: the development of cognitive psychology, Christian anthropology, Trinitarian, mystical and sacramental theology, and biblical exegesis worthy of Origen. They mapped out the range of scientific insight from psychology and ethics (and their pathologies) through medicine and physics to theology, prayer, and the mystical life. Whether or not they themselves

49. Στ. Ράμφος, *Το αδιανόητο τίποτε. Φιλοκαλικά ριζώματα του νεοελληνικού μηδενισμού* (Αθήνα: εκδ. Αρμός, 2010), 451. He cites K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory: Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th c.* (Ashgate, 2009), as his source here.

were mystics, they also charted the pathways and benchmarks of ascetic and mystical experience for future ages."[50]

Ramfos' interpretations are not only flawed regarding these two *Philokalia* Fathers, but also about all other Fathers of the *Philokalia*. Just to give you one more example: St Gregory Palamas was very knowledgeable about Aristoteleian philosophy and knew very well how to use Aristoteleian logic and the rest of the Aristoteleian corpus in his refutation of Varlaam and his followers.[51] Also, Ramfos' interpretation of the collection of the *Philokalia* texts as a whole and its significance in Greek culture, would find the Kollyvades Fathers in serious disagreement. Let us not forget the education of some of the Kollyvades Fathers themselves (esp. St Nikodemos of Mt Athos, St Macarios of Corinth and St Athanasios Parios), who were equal in credentials and studies with most of the representatives of Greek Enlightenment. In many cases, both the Kollyvades and their adversaries had the same teachers and they were studying side by side in the same schools. So, it is evident that Ramfos' accusations and claims are seriously flawed and seriously distort any plausible interpretation of the texts of *Philokalia*. It is not that the Kollyvades tried to arrest the cultural development of Greek culture nor that they did not know what they were doing by promoting "ultra-conservativism" and traditionalism.

The Kollyvades Fathers were consciously opposing what they recognised as a conscious attempt to subjugate Greek culture to

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50. See Corrigan 2009, 197.
51. See C. Athanasopoulos, 2015, "Demonstration (Απόδειξις) and its problems for St Gregory Palamas: Some neglected Aristotelian aspects of St Gregory Palamas' Philosophy and Theology" in Mikonja Knezevic, ed., *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*, (USA: Sebastian Press), 2015, 361-374.

Western ideas by the proponents of European Enlightenment, and this is why they published this collection of texts: to save both Greek culture and Orthodoxy from the destructive forces of Enlightenment. Their view on Enlightenment surely differs from the view on Enlightenment that Ramfos has. But this is not a sign of backwardness. It is a sign of deep cultural knowledge and understanding that can parallel great works of cultural critique and Philosophy of Culture of our own time (I will discuss briefly about this below). So, in this way, one can only recognise them as cultural prophets and seers. It is by no accident that Monk Moysis of Mt Athos in a highly critical book review of Ramfos' work (together with a criticism of the review of that work published by Professor of Theology Vassileiades) thinks that attempts at an interpretation of *Philokalia* such as these are not only twisting historical and cultural accuracy to suit personal needs for supporting the public image of an intellectual, but also rekindle arguments that led in the past to serious heresies. Ending his review, Monk Moysis of Mt Athos reaffirms the Kollyvades spirit thus: "Philokalia means the love of the beautiful. Beauty is Christ. The connection to Christ makes our life beautiful. Philokalia simply tells us how to do this. Dostoyefski says that beauty will save the world. Beauty is Christ. Particularly today, in an age of wordly pursuits and apostasy, we are in great need of hesychasm, the study of *Philokalia* and the connection to Christ and His Church".[52] There are many others who have condemned Ramfos' work as a misinterpretation (Yangazoglou, for example, has presented a well-documented critique, highlighting many historical inaccuracies in Ramfos'

52. Μοναχός Μωϋσής Αγιορείτης, "Η «Φιλοκαλία» και «Το αδιανόητο τίποτα»", *Χριστιανική Βιβλιογραφία*, 2010, as found in http://alopsis.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/filokalia_tipota.pdf, accessed 21/06/20) (my translation).

interpretation).[53] But due to limitations of space, I will stop my examination of Ramfos here.

I will finish this section with the interpretation proposed by Yannaras. Professor Chrestos Yannaras, a formidable contemporary Greek scholar, academic teacher and philosopher, in his work *Orthodoxy and the West in Modern Greece* (*Ορθοδοξία και Δύση στη Νεότερη Ελλάδα,* 1992), after a relatively favourable presentation of the work of St Macarios of Corinth and the Kollyvades movement, he accuses St Nikodemos of Mt Athos for accepting Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant pietistic) influences in two of his works (*Unseen Warfare* and *Spiritual Warfare*) and juristic attitudes about the meaning of Divine Justice, prevalent in St Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury (and made part of Roman Catholic dogma at the Council of Trent 1545-1563), in the work *The Rudder* and *Christoetheia* (*The ethos of Christ*). Note that for all these accusations, Professor Yannaras has received criticisms and replies by many Orthodox theologians in Greece.[54] For Yannaras, St Nikodemos is turning Orthodoxy into an amalgamation of puritanism and judicious understandings of the Gospel without any ecclesiological content and connection. In a later work (*Against Religion- Ενάντια στη θρησκεία* 2006), he not only repeats these criticisms against St Nikodemos of Mt Athos,[55] but he also explains the relatively recent success of *Philokalia* in the

53. See Σταύρος Γιαγκάζογλου, "Η παρουσία του Αγίου Νικοδήμου του Αγιορείτη στη θεολογική σκέψη του 20ου αι.", στο *Πρακτικά Β Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου, Ο Άγιος Νικόδημος ο Αγιορείτης 200 χρόνια από την κοίνησή του* (Πεντάλοφος Παιονίας: έκδοση Ιερού Κοινοβίου Οσίου Νικοδήμου, 2011), 131-160.
54. See for example π.Θεοδώρου Ζήση 2004 and the Letter from the Holy Community of Mt Athos published at the Holy Mountain in March 1993 (I discuss this in detail later on).
55. Χ. Γιανναράς, *Ενάντια στη θρησκεία* (Αθήνα: εκδ. Ίκαρος, 2006), 200-9.

West, on the basis of a serious lack of any ecclesiological dimension in the texts collected in this work. Yannaras thinks that this suits the egocentric culture and individualistic spirituality of Western Civilisation and the total lack of any ecclesiological commitment. For Yannaras, *Philokalia* is supporting an individualistic form of self-theosis that does away with communal ecclesiology. In his research into the way *ecclesia* is used in the texts of the *Philokalia* he finds that the word *ecclesia* is used only 36 times and all of these times the word is related to the building and the gathering of the monks and does not have any wider ecclesiological significance.[56] I think the following words summarise his interpretation of *Philokalia* most clearly: "In the pages of the *Philokalia* there is no mention of the conscious participation in the ecclesiastical aspect of the Holy Communion (in the eucharistic body that brings to reality in a dynamic way the Trinitarian mode of existence)- there is not even an indirect indication or suggestion that this participation is the salvation preached at the gospels. The aim and the way of the *philokalic* theory and practice is purely individualistic: If the mind comes to the heart, with the persistent individual (psychosomatic) exercise of ascesis, humans are saved- there is no need for anything else".[57]

Without going into the details of the evidence that Yannaras accumulates to support these criticisms against St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and *Philokalia* as a whole (this might be perhaps a future project), a few thoughts in the form of possible replies will suffice here. Firstly, the fact that all the Kollyvades strove to bring about a return to a more ecclesiological dimension for worship by itself is a refutation of Yannaras' claims that the *Philokalia* texts have no

56. Γιανναράς 2006, 202.
57. Γιανναράς 2006, 203 (my translation).

ecclesiological dimension. It is by no accident that St Macarios of Corinth (that Yannaras discusses in a more favourable way in his earlier work) gave his collection to St Nikodemos of Mt Athos and no one else. One look at the works of the Kollyvades suffices to prove that Yannaras tries to see *Philokalia* in the way that the West tried to see it (esp. the Roman Catholic scholars mentioned above). Reading through the interpretation of Yannaras on the *Philokalia*, one cannot help but bring to memory the accusations Barlaam of Calabria made against the hesychasts as navel-gazers. Yannaras remains on the appearance. If one were to use Kantian terminology here, Yannaras is stuck on the *phenomenon* and does not even dare see through to the *noumenon*. He remains on the level of interpretation of isolated texts in *Philokalia* that are picked out without an understanding of the cultural background that produced them nor with any comprehension of an interpretational line that makes them united and coherent. I will just give one example of how Yannaras' interpretation is completely wrong, when it comes to *Philokalia*. In the fourth volume of the Venice edition of Philokalia, we have the work of St Gregory Palamas named (in the English translation) *A New Testament Decalogue* (*Δεκάλογος της κατά Χριστόν νομοθεσίας)*. In this work, we see St Gregory Palamas revealing the ecclesiological dimension of his work in a separate long paragraph, where he discusses the importance of dedicating Sunday to the Lord. In it, he discusses not only the importance of communing with Christ and the other members of the Church in a Holy Eucharistic way every Sunday and other celebration of a Church feast, but also he goes deeper into the way that dedication of Sunday to the Lord in this ecclesiological way will mean an ecclesiological transformation of all of one's time in prayer. In this day (Sunday), we are called to cease from all work and gather

with all others in the Church to glorify the Lord together. Once this is done in a meaningful and eschatological way, Sunday transforms all other time. All other days are directed to the ecclesiological and eschatological fact of the Sunday, the fact of dedication of Sunday, the ecclesiological dimension of Sunday for the transformation of one's being. According to St Gregory Palamas, the sincere and eschatologically meaningful participation in the Holy Eucharist with clean conscience (through repentance) and honest faith in the salvation that only the triune God can offer, united with all others and glorifying with them our common Lord, will force upon one the transformation of all his life, turning his attention throughout all his time, all the other days of the week, away from the earthly goods and pursuits and into the domain of God that should fill his life with the grace of Holy Spirit.

So, we can clearly see, in these few words of St Gregory Palamas that are included in the *Philokalia* volumes, how wrong is Yannaras' interpretation. Attempts at grasping the meaning of *Philokalia* such as the one proposed by Yannaras only show how wrong it is to divest the cultural background from one's focus and isolate passages only to identify weaknesses. I am not the only one who sees problematic the interpretation of Yannaras. The Holy Community of Mt Athos in a letter that they published in the Holy Mountain in March 1993, they stress that according to a unanimous decision of Mt Athos Holy Community, St Nikodemos was recognised as a Saint and according to Elder Gavriil Donysiatis, St Nikodemos is "the most important Elder and Guide in our monastic life". To support their refutation of the claims made by Yannaras they bring forward a series of texts from St Kosmas Aitolos (one of the Kollyvades Fathers), who is regarded more favourably by Yannaras than St Nikodemos, to prove that

St Kosmas Aitolos is not different than St Nikodemos in the way they see the Christian way of life. The Holy Community of Mt Athos also stress that when one sees the corpus of St Nikodemos in its entirety, one can see that, even though, in isolated instances, St Nikodemos uses some terms and ways of expression that can be found in Roman Catholic texts, this fact does not overthrow the fact that the meaning and content of St Nikodemos' works go against all heresies including the Roman Catholic and Protestant ones. According to the Holy Community of Mt Athos, St. Nikodemos' use of these words and expressions is due to the freedom of spirit that St Nikodemos has and his masterly and fearless way in which he can use language and theological terms in a novel way, while condemning all heresy at the same time, indicating with sternness the mistakes and errors and accepting a positive innovation where he sees it as such. Before citing a long list of known clergy and monastics who have spoken and written favourably about St Nikodemos, they bring to attention the words of an anonymous Elder of Mt Athos who when someone mentioned to him the words of Yannaras about St Nikodemos, this anonymous Elder said that Yannaras, in criticising in this way St Nikodemos, is making himself a "pure" ("*καθαρός*"), setting himself outside the Church, coming near to the heresy of Catharism (or heresy of Albigensians, a dualist or Gnostic revival movement which thrived between the 12th and 14th centuries in Southern Europe, esp. northern Italy and southern France). The Fathers of Holy Mountain also see that hidden in the motives of Yannaras is his attempt to vindicate his own works (like *The Person and Eros*) that come to direct opposition to works of St Nikodemos.[58]

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58. Ιερά Κοινότητα Αγίου Όρους, *Ανακοίνωσις- Αναίρεσις των πεπλανημένων θέσεων*

In the above examination of two non-Orthodox and two Orthodox (or at least Orthodox oriented) interpreters of *Philokalia* Fathers, it is evident that any interpretation of *Philokalia* that pays no attention to the collection as a whole and does not have as an interpretative direction or principle the Palamas and wider hesychastic corpus, in their cultural and theological context, leads to serious misinterpretations. I did not investigate here blatantly wrong interpretations (that for example make *Philokalia* resemble a Sufi or a Gnostic collection of texts, with no Christian orientation and character). I am also not going to investigate recent attempts to create an amalgamation of gnostic, eastern and western wisdom and Philokalic texts to support a method of counselling that has been termed in Greece and abroad "Philosophical Practice" or "Philosophical Counselling", which has nothing to do with the properly named philosophical discipline of Philosophical Practice.

I will proceed next to giving a brief overview of what I mean by "appropriate cultural context" that one has to have to produce an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*.

9. What is the appropriate cultural context for an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*?

Undoubtedly, when one is embarking on a specific cultural and linguistic practice, such as the one of interpreting a collection of texts (and in our case the texts of the *Philokalia),* one is faced with this dilemma: how can I understand what people, who lived

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του κ. Χρήστου Γιανναρά περί του εν Αγίοις πατρός ημών Νικοδήμου του Αγιορείτου, Εν Αγίω Όρει 1993 (as found in https://orthodoxostypos.gr/ ; accessed 22/06/2020).

hundreds and thousands of years ago, in a completely different culture and time period, say and write? Understanding the sayings of people of a different time is part of our collective survival toolkit. We believe that certain things in our nature are the same no matter how many years have passed and no matter how different each culture is. We feel we need to learn from our past so that we can protect ourselves from dangers in the present and in the future. But we also believe that we can get things wrong. Problems such as these, of course, are with us from the very first time we started using written forms of communication.

One of the ancient Greek texts that is much quoted in relevant discussions is Plato's *Phaedrus* (274c-275b) and the idea there is that writing has produced people who think they know a lot, but in reality they generally know nothing; "they are a tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality". This I would like to claim is the predicament we are faced, when we look at *Philokalia*. Do we really know what each saying or text there means, or we *think* we know? What can give us relative certainty in the meaning of each text of *Philokalia* that we study?

In contemporary philosophy and, in particular, in British Analytic Philosophy, the problem of meaning is one of endless debates and many theories have been used to argue each position on what is meaning and how best to secure our understanding of the meaning of a word or a sentence. I think one of the more successful theories comes with Wittgenstein (esp. his later work). Language for Wittgenstein is not only an expression of a given culture, it also determines it and provides its boundaries. For Wittgenstein (influenced here by Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, 1918), language games depend on the culture that produced them and exist as forms of life, in the same way that culture can be

thought as a form of life, with its own rules, conventions, actions, institutions, behaviours and development.[59] But because culture cannot be changed, but it has to be lived, it binds language in what it can express about it.[60] So, language and culture determine each other and provide a barrier that cannot be penetrated.[61]

So, one could claim that evidently we cannot ever be certain about our interpretative acts in relation to texts like the *Philokalia*, because we do not have the form of life that produced it, culture being a binding force here. But is this right? Let us first see what we can understand with the term "culture".

Culture can be conceived as a shared set of beliefs, values, social practices and symbolic formations (in our case related to theological ways of understanding and interacting with the world, people and God). According to Raymond Williams (1921-1988, a Welsh

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59. See L. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 134; L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Foundations of Mathematics* (Oxford: Blackwell 2004), 95; 335-6; ; Wittgenstein, L., 2005, Philosophical Investigations (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 23; L. Wittgenstein, Culture and Value (Oxford: Blackwell 2002), 8-9; see also William James DeAngelis, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Cultural Point of View: Philosophy in the Darkness of this Time* (Ashgate Wittgensteinian Studies 2007).
60. See L. Wittgenstein, L., *On Certainty*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 95-99; *Private Investigations*, II, 226; see also Stanley Cavell, "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture," *Inquiry*, 31, 3, 1988, 253-264.
61. See Wittgenstein's *Private Investigations* 206, 415; *On Certainty*, 357-360; L Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (Oxford: Blackwell 2004), 567-9, see also S. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 44-48; H. J., Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 125-126; M. Baker, M., P. M. S. Hacker, P. M. S., *Wittgenstein, Rules, Grammar, and Necessity*, Vol. 2, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 239-246; Peter Hacker, Peter, "Forms of Life", Special Issue: Wittgenstein and Forms of Life, *Nordic Wittgenstein Review*, 2015, https://doi.org/10.15845/nwr.v4i0.3320.

cultural theorist and philosopher of education), culture is based primarily on two components: a) a whole way of life that produces it, and b) the arts and education that are its products. In his book *Culture and Society* (first appeared in 1958, but in my examination, it will be the 1960 edition), he writes about the formation of our historical understanding of culture, thus: first, "a general state or habit of the mind', having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of the arts'. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual".[62] After an investigation of the various theories of culture that have been proposed through time, Williams concludes in a peculiar view of culture, influenced by Arnold, Toynbee, Elliot, and Newman who believe that religion is a key component of culture (esp. for the last three): "What we sometimes call 'culture'-a religion, a moral code, a system of law, a body of work in the arts-is to be seen as only a part, the conscious part of that 'culture' which is the whole way of life".[63] Addressing our problem of how best to approach a product of a given culture (in our case the *Philokalia*), in a later work (*The Long Revolution*, 1961), Williams has this to say: "we need to distinguish three levels of culture [...]. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and

62. R. Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (New York: Anchor Books, 1960), xiv.
63. R. Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, 254.

period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition."[64] Having Williams' thoughts and Elliot's dicta "the culture being essentially the incarnation of the religion [...] of a people",[65] I think we can have a sufficiently defined and robust concept of culture with which we can formulate a brief sketch regarding the success of our task of providing some guiding principles for an appropriate interpretation of *Philokalia*.

I think Wittgenstein, if he were to revisit his Spenglerian intuitions here,[66] would agree that an interpretation of a selection of texts like the *Philokalia* can be understood only within the level of a culture of selective tradition. If one understands and lives within this culture then products of this culture can be understood. Because selective tradition can survive time periods and limitations, one who lives within a hesychastic selective tradition can understand the *Philokalia*. Note that in this way, not only one can escape the dead ends of cultural relativism, but also can find a way to be certain about understanding a collection of texts like the *Philokalia*. Note also that to understand this culture of selective tradition one has to live it, i.e., not engage with it simply to criticise and find faults at it, but one has to be fully immersed within it. This is why I maintained from the start that only someone who knows and engages fully with hesychasm as a tradition, the Palamas corpus and the Kollyvades movement can interpret the texts and the Fathers of *Philokalia* with some certainty.

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64. R. Williams, R*., The Long Revolution* (Great Britain: Encore Edition from Broadview Press., 1961), 66.
65. T.S. Elliot, *Notes towards a definition of culture* (Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1949), 27.
66. See for related interpretations the work of C. Humphries, and W. Schweidler, eds., *Wittgenstein, Philosopher of Cultures*, (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2017).

10. Conclusions

What I have tried to do with this work, is to present some key aspects of the collection of texts summarily named "Philokalia". I briefly sketched not only some of the cultural and historical background of the work, but outlined some key principles regarding its interpretation. I argued that only someone with first-hand experience of hesychasm as a way of life, knowledge and engagement with the works of St Gregory Palamas (who has influenced the Kollyvades Fathers in the compilation and edition of the texts), and the Kollyvades movement, their aims, purposes and key texts of their protagonists, can understand and interpret these texts. I also briefly described some key mis-interpretations of *Philokalia* (two from Christian non-Orthodox sources and two from Orthodox oriented sources). The brief examination of these misinterpretations showed that the they arose because of the lack of acquaintance with the hesychastic way of life, the texts of St Gregory Palamas, and a misunderstanding of what the Kollyvades movement tried to achieve. Finally, I outlined how contemporary philosophical approaches to the problem of cultural relativism can help in the support of my claim that *Philokalia* can only be interpreted within a Hesychastic and Palamite cultural context.